

IN THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1 to 7 (canceled).

Claim 8 (currently amended): A process for producing a flat product made of a zirconium alloy having a Kearns factor FT of between 0.30 and 0.70 consisting of:

smelting ~~an ingot of a~~ zirconium alloy, ~~the ingot~~ having a composition, in percentages by weight, of

Nb = 0.5 to 3.5%

Sn = 0 to 1.5%

Fe = 0 to 0.5%

Cr + V = 0 to 0.3%

S = 0 to 100 ppm

O = 0 to 2000 ppm

Si = 0 to 150 ppm, a balance being zirconium and impurities resulting from the smelting;

forming ~~[[the]] an ingot of the~~ smelted zirconium alloy;

performing on the ingot at least one hot rolling pass in order to obtain a flat product, a final of the hot-rolling passes being carried out between 900 and 1030°C and not being followed by any quenching operation;

annealing the flat product not exceeding a temperature of 800°C; and

performing at least one cold-rolling/annealing cycle on the flat product wherein the annealing cycle does not occur above 800°C to produce a flat product having a Kearns factor FT of between 0.30 and 0.70.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The process according to claim 8, wherein the Nb content of the alloy is from 0.5 to 1.5%.

Claim 10 to 14 (canceled).

Claim 15 (currently amended): A process for producing a flat product made of a zirconium alloy having a Kearns factor FT of between 0.30 and 0.70 consisting of:

smelting ~~an ingot of a~~ zirconium alloy, ~~the ingot~~ having a composition, in percentages by weight, of

Nb = 0.5 to 3.5%

Sn = 0 to 1.5%

Fe = 0 to 0.5%

Cr + V = 0 to 0.3%

S = 0 to 100 ppm

O = 0 to 2000 ppm

Si = 0 to 150 ppm, a balance being zirconium and impurities resulting from the smelting;

forming ~~[[the]] an ingot of the smelted zirconium alloy;~~

performing on the ingot at least one hot rolling pass in order to obtain a flat product, a final of the hot-rolling passes being carried out between 900 and 1030°C and not being followed by any quenching operation; and

performing at least one cold-rolling/annealing cycle on the flat product wherein the annealing cycle does not occur above 800°C to produce a flat product having a Kearns factor FT of between 0.30 to 0.70.

Claim 16 (previously presented): The process according to claim 15, wherein the Nb content of the alloy is from 0.5% to 1.5%.

Claims 17 to 19 (canceled).